



## Freedom Charter

The Freedom Charter was adopted by five organisations in the Congress of the People on June 26<sup>th</sup> 1966, one and a half years after the adoption of the Women's Charter, seven years after the formation of the ANC Women's League, and twelve years after the admission of women to membership of the ANC in 1943.

Without the prior admission of women to the ANC, the Freedom Charter would have been unimaginable, or else it would rightly have been taken as a fraud.

Without mass organisation of the women in the ANC

Women's League and in the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), the Freedom Charter would hardly have been possible.

The five Freedom Charter signatory organisations were: SACOD, SAIC, SACPO, SACTU and the ANC.

All of them were racially-defined except SACTU, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, which was a federation of trade unions, and non-racial, like the Federation of South African Women (which was not a signatory).

But clearly, and in the light of the content of the Freedom Charter, the entire exercise amounted to a movement away from separation and towards non-racialism.

What does the Freedom Charter say about women?

- *that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;*
- *Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;*
- *The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;*
- *Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for*

*equal work;*

The Freedom Charter does not:

- mention Gender
- mention Patriarchy
- advocate Structurelessness

The Women's Charter of 1954 also does not mention these things.

All of the signatories of the Freedom Charter were men. Does this invalidate the Freedom Charter? No, it does not.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The Freedom Charter, Congress of the People, 1955.](#)
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